

Docket Item # 3
BAR CASE # 2011-0011

BAR Meeting
March 23, 2011

ISSUE: Request for new construction of 21 townhouse units (17 single-family and 4 triplexes), 3 multi-family buildings and park, and waiver of rooftop screening requirement for Phase IV of the James Bland Redevelopment Project

APPLICANT: Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority by Kenneth Wire (McGuire Woods)

LOCATION: 898 North Alfred Street

ZONE: Zoned CDD #16

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends deferral of the Certificate of Appropriateness, with the following recommendations for further study:

General

1. That the Board waive the screening requirements for the rooftop HVAC units and instead require the applicant to work with Staff, in the field, to locate the units so that they are not visible or are placed in the most subtle location feasible (previous BAR condition);
2. That the applicant use appropriate building materials, such as wood, composite, or synthetic materials which are high-quality, paintable, millable and solid throughout, for items such as door surrounds, front doors, railings and the like. Front doors shall be solid wood (Development-wide condition);
3. That the applicant propose windows that are in conformance with the *Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications*;
4. That the applicant work with Staff on the text and graphics of the historic marker and conform to the standards set forth in the City's recently adopted Wayfinding Program.
5. That the applicant work with Staff to determine the least obtrusive location for the mail boxes.
6. That the applicant adequately screen all utilities and trash receptacles from the street (public or private).

Multi-Family

7. That the applicant provide a materials board and samples for the multi-family buildings.
8. That the applicant simplify and coordinate the individual color palette for the multi-family buildings.
9. That the applicant provide the courtyard elevation for the center building.

Townhouse

10. That the location of the solar collectors on the individual townhouses be approved by BAR Staff prior to their installation to insure that they are either not visible or are minimally visible (previous BAR condition);
11. That all of the loft levels be painted the same color, either a light grey or light taupe, instead of the variety of subtle colors proposed by the applicant and that any exposed metal channels be painted or otherwise made non-reflective (previous BAR condition, with modification);
12. That the garage doors may be painted the same color as the rear elevation of the townhouse where they are located or painted white to match the trim;
13. That all visible roof materials (including porch roofs) be standing seam metal, metal shingles, slate or synthetic slate. (Development-wide condition);
14. That the applicant continue to work with Staff to refine the door, window and trim treatments so that they are stylistically compatible and do not have a mix of styles on a single townhouse. (Development-wide condition);
15. That the applicant revise the body color palette and propose new and different light fixtures.
16. That all of the units adjacent to the park should front onto the park.
17. That the applicant add windows to the side elevation of the loft level where possible.
18. That the window hoods at the first floor of Lots 18 and 21 on Madison Street be removed.
19. That the townhouse units on Lots 5-6 on the private street be a pair of twins.
20. That the applicant restudy the fenestration of the brick townhouse on Lots 3-4 on the private street and consider adding a paired window at the third story.

BOARD ACTION, February 9, 2011 (January meeting was rescheduled due to inclement weather): Deferred for further study, 4-0.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board deferred approval of the application and asked the applicant to continue to refine the multi-family buildings with the following considerations:

1. Strengthen the differentiation between the end buildings and the center building through the use of architectural details and materials, while still maintaining a family resemblance;
2. Restudy the proposed arch entry feature at the entrances to the courtyards;
3. Strengthen the visual and physical projections on the buildings in plan and elevation and emphasize this through subtly different materials and colors;
4. Restudy the single fire exit doors on the west elevation of the center building to minimize its appearance as a door and to visually coordinate this element with the proportions of the surrounding fenestration.
5. Provide more information on the materials, colors and details of the multifamily buildings.
6. Provide additional information on the materials, colors and details of the townhouses and park.

SPEAKERS

Greg Shron, representing EYA and ARHA, made a brief introduction of Phase IV and noted that

he was seeking comments from the Board rather than an approval at this time.

Smita Anand, architect for the applicant, spoke in support of the application and responded to questions from the Board.

Brian "A.J." Jackson, representing EYA and ARHA, explained the change from two to three buildings from a financing perspective.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Ms. Rankin asked about the townhouse elevations and wanted to clear that the townhouses still need work before the applicant requests approval for them. Mr. Cox explained that the townhouse elevations were only being provided at this time as context for the multifamily buildings. Ms. Rankin thought that all three buildings looked identical and wanted the applicant to further explore ways to differentiate the buildings. She also stated that more differentiation will break up the massing. Ms. Rankin found this scheme to be an improvement over the previous scheme and moving in the right direction.

Ms. Anand responded that they will remove an accent band above the first story windows on the center building so that it is only on the two end buildings, to differentiate the three buildings. She also commented that the fiber cement panels will be different colors on the end buildings. Mr. Cox stated that staff's goal is to ensure there is no perception of a change in quality of materials among the buildings. Ms. Anand also noted that they will restudy the courtyard arches to make them simpler and relate to the iron grates at the garage entrance.

Ms. Kelley stated that she was pleased with the general direction of the design and stressed that it should be kept simple but wanted to see an increased depth of the projecting elements. She agreed with the staff recommendations. She also advised the applicant to study the windows for these buildings and the townhouses as she is disappointed with the amount of vinyl in the windows that have already been approved in other phases of the project.

Mr. Duffy agreed that this scheme was a significant step forward and agreed with the staff review. He reiterated Ms. Kelley's window comment. He commented that a change in the projections and recesses would add dimension. He requested details of the balconies. He agreed with the comment to restudy the arches and advised that the applicant continue to study (and simplify) the entrance from the courtyards. He advised the applicant to focus on public spaces and ways to bring the residents together socially.

Chairman Conkey supported the general direction of the plan and liked the three building scheme, commenting that it was a more sophisticated and developed plan. Chairman Conkey had several questions for the applicant. First, he asked about the choice of windows and inquired whether these buildings would have metal windows -- which are generally more appropriate for a multi-family building. Mr. Shron responded that commercial aluminum windows would be too expensive and that the choice of windows will be a challenge because of strict energy requirements and the noise from Route 1. Mr. Shron said they would research the windows further and consider a wood-like fiberglass product or high-quality aluminum-clad. Chairman Conkey stated that the drawings should accurately portray the window type. Chairman Conkey

asked about the split-face concrete masonry unit and said that he personally had an issue with head joints in masonry lintels. He recommended the use of precast heads to avoid joints. He encouraged the use of different brick colors. He was also concerned about the use of HardiePanel because the joint detailing is generally more appropriate for single-family residential use and he would prefer a stucco finish in these locations. Chairman Conkey also expressed concern about the garage screens/metal grills because the noise and odors from the garage tend to kill adjacent street life. He recommended the addition of vegetation and asked if the applicant could show how the sidewalk relates to the screening. Chairman Conkey also offered a recommendation that the building corners be elevated at the parapet to visually reinforce the vertically. He also suggested exploring windows that were two stories in height with a spandrel at the upper levels to recall the scale of factory windows.

On a motion by Mr. Duffy, seconded by Ms. Kelley, the Board voted to defer the application, 4-0.

REASON

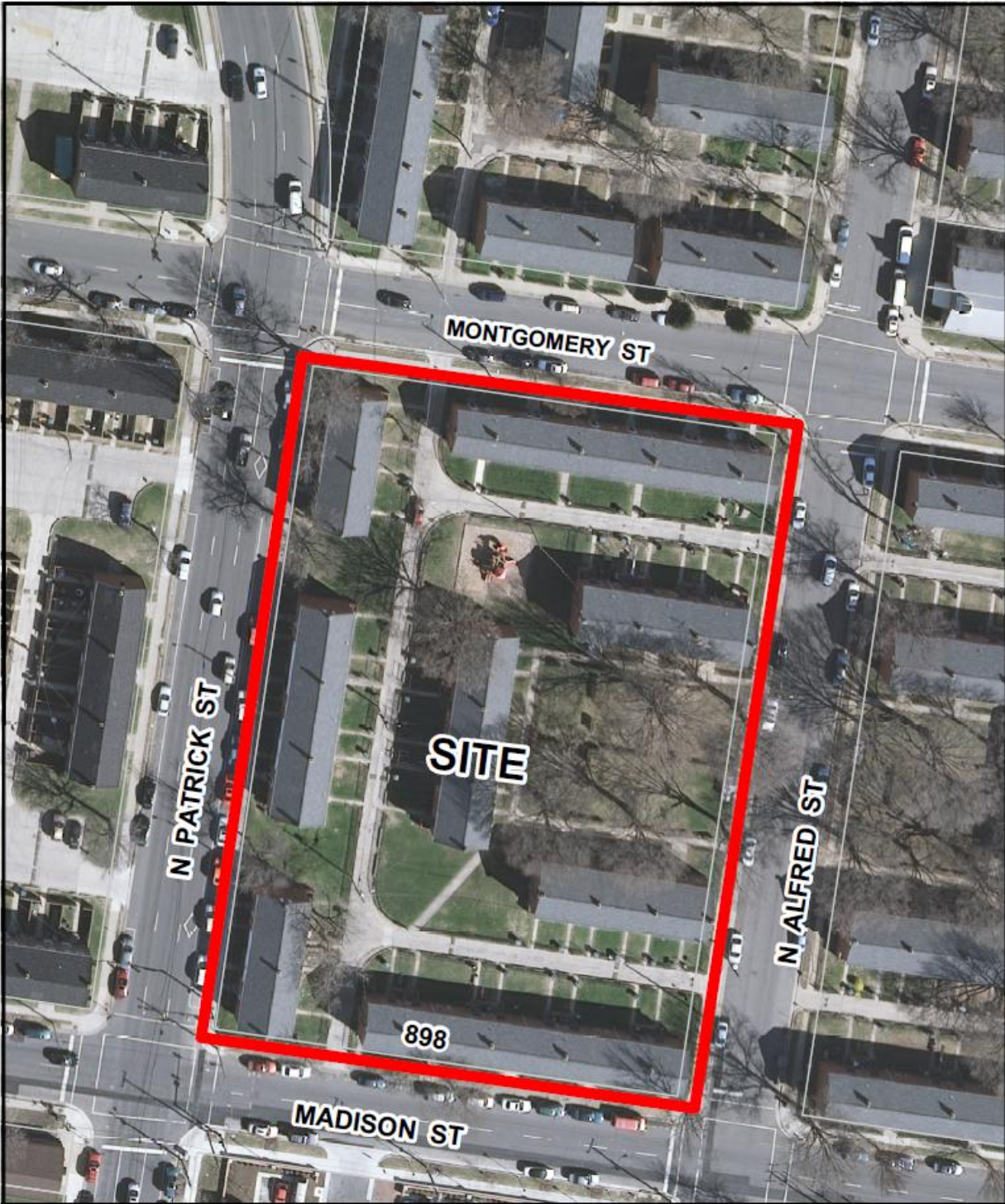
The Board generally agreed with the analysis in the Staff report and believed the proposed scheme is a great improvement from the concept review. The Board advised the applicant to consider and study the staff recommendations and their comments.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, January 26, 2011: Staff recommends that the Board defer approval of the application and ask the applicant to continue to refine the multi-family buildings with the following considerations:

1. Strengthen the differentiation between the end buildings and the center building through the use of architectural details and materials, while still maintaining a family resemblance;
2. Restudy the proposed arch entry feature at the entrances to the courtyards;
3. Strengthen the visual and physical projections on the buildings in plan and elevation and emphasize this through subtly different materials and colors;
4. Restudy the single fire exit doors on the west elevation of the center building to minimize its appearance as a door and to visually coordinate this element with the proportions of the surrounding fenestration.
5. Provide more information on the materials, colors and details of the multifamily buildings.
6. Provide additional information on the materials, colors and details of the townhouses and park.

*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE: In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period. In the case for a certificate or permit for a project that requires a development special use permit or site plan under section 11-400 of the zoning ordinance, the period of validity shall be coincident with the validity of the development special use permit or site plan pursuant to section 11-418 of the ordinance.

**BUILDING PERMIT NOTE: Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-746-4200 for further information.



BAR CASE #2011-0011

Phase IV



Note: The applicant has bypassed Phase III in order to move forward on the multi-family buildings and better serve the phasing and delivery of certain unit types. While it is the third construction phase to come before the Board, to avoid confusion, it will continue to be known as Phase IV because that is the way this block was designated on the original plans.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of 21 townhouse units (17 single-family and 4 triplexes), three multi-family buildings, certain park elements, and a waiver of the rooftop screening requirement for Phase IV of the James Bland Redevelopment Project, located on the block bounded by North Alfred Street, Madison Street, North Patrick Street and Montgomery Street.

Phase IV is located on the block immediately to the north of the Charles Houston Recreation Center and immediately to the west of Phase II, which was approved by the BAR in May 2010. The entire redevelopment project consists of five phases on five contiguous city blocks.

Prior Reviews and Approvals for the James Bland Redevelopment:

September 24, 2008: Approval of Permit to Demolish and Concept Approval (BAR Case #2008-0150/0151).

October 2008: Development Special Use Permit approved by Planning Commission and City Council (DSP #2008-0013).

May 27, 2009: Approval of Certificate of Appropriateness and Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement for Phase I (BAR Case #2009-0088/0089).

May 26, 2010: Approval of Certificate of Appropriateness and Waiver of Rooftop HVAC Screening Requirement for Phase II (BAR Case #2010-0070).

February 9, 2011: Change to previously approved plans for windows on certain units in Phase I (rear alley elevations of market-rate units and all ARHA units)

March 2011: Development Special Use Permit (DSP #2011-0003) approved by Planning Commission and City Council for changes in Phase IV from the original approval

Concept Review

The applicant received concept approval for the five block redevelopment project from the BAR in 2008, prior to obtaining approval from the Planning Commission and City Council. The BAR concept review process was established as a way to give applicants an early indication as to whether the project they propose would ultimately gain approval from the BAR. At concept review, the Board evaluates the project's "scale, mass and general architectural character" and determines whether the overall plan is compatible with the surrounding historic district. The original concept review also included approval of two multi-family buildings in Phase IV. The applicant has since revised the design of the multi-family buildings to be three rather than two

buildings. This three building revision was strongly supported by the Board at the previous hearing.

Certificate of Appropriateness Review

At this stage, the BAR is reviewing the details of Phase IV to determine whether the final design for Phase IV complies with the Board's standards and the *Design Guidelines*, focusing on colors, materials, proportions, and relationships between architectural elements. Review will not include discussion of the height or mass of the project unless it was specifically exempted in the concept review approval.

Phase IV Project Description

Phase IV is an entire block that will have 21 townhouses, three multi-family buildings and a park. A private street with a public access easement will run north-south, approximately in the middle of the block. During concept approval, the Board supported two multi-family buildings of this general size on the western half of the block. While the massing, scale and general architectural character remain similar to what was approved during the concept review, there will now be three, four-story multi-family buildings instead of two, four-story buildings. The original plan was for two multi-family buildings with a mix of ARHA on the lower levels and multi-family units above. For financing reasons, the applicant now proposes that the two smaller buildings will have only ARHA units and the larger center building will have only market-rate units. To the east of the private street will be the portion of the block with 21 mixed townhouse units. The northeastern portion of this block will have a small park that will be open to the public. The Board previously reviewed and endorsed the design of the park in concept at the October 2010 BAR hearing.

The architectural styles of the proposed townhouses are designed to complement the existing architecture found within the Parker-Gray historic district. The site plan also strives to re-integrate the block into the Parker-Gray fabric and historic development patterns, something the current James Bland public housing project does not do.

Multi-Family Buildings (North Patrick Street)

The three multi-family buildings are bounded by North Patrick Street, Madison Street, Montgomery Street and a private street. The two smaller buildings will each house 16 ARHA units and will measure approximately 70 feet by 76 feet. The center market-rate building will have 44 units and will measure approximately 172 feet by 76 feet. Two courtyards, one each between the center building and the end buildings, will be 20 feet in width and will function as the primary entrances for both ARHA and market rate condominium units to provide an opportunity for social interaction between residents on a daily basis.

The Board first reviewed and commented upon these buildings at the rescheduled January meeting held on February 9, 2011. The Board felt that the proposed multi-family building design was a significant improvement over what had been presented during concept review, and made the following additional comments (Staff recommendations with Board comments):

1. Strengthen the differentiation between the end buildings and the center building through

the use of architectural details and materials, while still maintaining a family resemblance.

2. Restudy the proposed arch entry feature at the entrances to the courtyards and to pay close attention to the public spaces.
3. Strengthen the visual and physical projections on the buildings in plan and elevation and emphasize this through subtly different materials and colors to break up the massing and add dimension.
4. Restudy the single fire exit doors on the west elevation of the center building to minimize its appearance as a door and to visually coordinate this element with the proportions of the surrounding fenestration.
5. Provide more information on the materials, colors and details of the multi-family buildings. Specifically, to use appropriate, high-quality windows as they were disappointed with what was being used in Phase I. In addition, there was a request for details on the balconies and other metalwork proposed for the project. The applicant was advised to not have head joints in the masonry lintels and to consider two distinct brick colors to differentiate the center building from the end buildings.
6. Provide additional information on the materials, colors and details of the townhouses and park.
7. Elevate the buildings at the parapet to visually reinforce the verticality.
8. Consider the use of a spandrel to create a double-height window at the second and third stories.

Each building is four stories with a flat roof. The buildings have an industrial architectural character with a pronounced fenestration. The majority of the windows will have the effect of triple windows through the use of a double-hung over a fixed window and arranged in double and triple configurations. The overall design composition of the elevations uses the classical form of a base, middle and capital and the three buildings generally form a five part Palladian plan (a central building with hyphens connecting smaller buildings on each side.) The base and middle will be predominantly brick with a split-face CMU string course separating the two. The top floor, or capital level, will be lighter in color with a strong cornice line and HardiePanel fiber cement wall material. All of the buildings will have alternating projections to break up the massing. Since the previous hearing and after meeting with Staff, the applicant has made the following changes:

1. Proposed two different brick colors (end buildings to be a lighter color).
2. Restudied the entry courtyards: removed arched opening and replaced with brick piers with simple metal screen.
3. Coordinated metal work throughout project: garage level grills, metal fencing at entry piers and balconies.
4. Simplified stringcourse on end buildings and removed from center building.
5. Brought light-colored HardiePanels down to second and third stories on center building.
6. Strengthened cornices at corners and center projection of center building.
7. Removed rustication at first story of center building.
8. Studied spandrel option.
9. Added single inset/recess on end buildings at center on North Patrick Street and the private street to allow for building access to accommodate trash/utility area.

The materials proposed at this point include: brick, split-face block and a formed metal or synthetic cornice.

Townhouses

Each block face is summarized below. See the attached drawings for additional detail.

Madison Street (sheet A-001, Lots 18-21)

There is one building stick with the appearance of six townhouses (two market-rate townhouses and two ARHA triplexes) facing Madison Street. Like the previous phases, the units on this block face have varied architectural styles. Variety is also achieved through different window patterns, door styles and roof materials. The units are all three stories in height at the street, although the market-rate townhouses have an additional fourth floor recessed loft level.

North Alfred Street (sheet A-002, Lots 11-17)

At the south end of this block is a side elevation of an ARHA triplex. The main building stick has seven townhouses, each three stories in height with a recessed fourth story loft level. Immediately to the north of this is an ARHA triplex appearing as two townhouses. A variety of materials and styles are on this elevation, including three painted brick Queen Anne style townhouses with projecting bays.

Park (Montgomery Street) (sheet A-003, Lots 7-10)

The buildings on this strip front the public park which is located on Montgomery Street. There is a pair of market-rate townhouses flanked on each side by an ARHA triplex (a side elevation on the east side and a front elevation to the west). These units are all frame construction with the center two having the recessed fourth floor loft level.

Private Street (sheet A-004/5, Lots 5-6/1-4)

This street is adjacent to the park and across from the multi-family buildings. The northernmost end will have an ARHA side elevation with an opening separating a pair of townhouses with a recessed fourth story loft level. The alley driveway is across from the multi-family building driveway. Immediately to the south of the driveway is a stick of four townhouses, two frame and two unpainted brick.

The market-rate townhouses will have garage doors accessed off of the internal alleys. In addition, some units may have an optional rear deck accessed off the second floor and solar collectors on the roof.

Materials

The applicant has not submitted materials for this phase but the following building materials have been approved in Phases I and II.

Siding:	HardiePlank smooth lap fiber cement
Loft Level:	HardiePanel smooth fiber cement
Windows:	MW Jefferson SDL, painted, wood frame and sash CPVC brickmould and sill

	Precast stone sills and headers
Entry Doors:	Solid wood, painted
Trim:	CPVC, molded polyurethane (“Fypon”), painted
Roofing:	Pre-finished aluminum, synthetic slate and stamped metal shingles
Fences and Gates:	Cedar with opaque stain
Porch:	CPVC and Fypon, painted
Rear Decks, Rails:	Azek, painted white
Garage Doors:	Steel flush panel, painted (trim color)

With respect to colors, the applicant is showing a variety of color schemes on the units, with an emphasis on grays, blues and similar soft hues.

Park

As part of the concept approval, the Board made the following condition:

That the applicant work with Staff as the design of the park spaces evolves to ensure compatibility with the character of the district as relates to setting, landscape, the street grid and public space.

Park Overview

The park will be located at the southwest corner of North Alfred and Montgomery streets. The park will have open space for passive recreation and informal gatherings as well as an active children’s play area. The proposed design has a central lawn with a small stage/gathering space at one end. The pavers, play equipment and other features have a musical theme, such as a climbable “base cleft” mound. The park is accessed from multiple walkways from the adjacent sidewalks. The park will be enclosed by a low metal fence and trees. While City-owned and open to the public, the park and associated amenities will be maintained by the HOA. The actual details of the park will be reviewed administratively by Staff with the final site plan for that block, which likely will not be submitted until 2012. The applicant proposes metal and wood slat park benches and large metal planters. The light fixture will be the standard City colonial style light pole.

At their September 23, 2010 meeting, the Park and Recreation Commission reviewed the conceptual design of the park and received public comments. On October 21, 2010, the Commission recommended approval of the conceptual plan with two conditions. First, the active play area of the park should be less of a focus and should be moved to a corner or side of the park; and, second, the Arts Commission should be made aware of the park design as it is further developed during the final site plan review. The park design must meet the requirements of the DSUP conditions and must be to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and RP&CA. The Board reviewed and endorsed the park concept at the October 2010 meeting.

II. HISTORY:

Parker-Gray has been recognized as a local historic district since 1984, with review and approval of exterior alterations, demolition and new construction by the by the Parker-Gray Board of Architecture Review. The boundaries for the locally designated district include all five blocks of James Bland Homes.

In early 2007, the City began the process of nominating the Uptown/Parker-Gray neighborhood to the National Register of Historic Places. The boundaries of the Uptown/Parker-Gray historic district encompass the local district as well as a number of additional blocks. On January 12, 2010, the National Park Service listed the Uptown/Parker-Gray Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. Prior to that, in June 2008, the State of Virginia listed the historic district on the Virginia Landmarks Register.

In advance of the demolition of the existing buildings in Phase I, the applicant thoroughly documented James Bland Homes as required by the BAR when approving the Permit to Demolish. The documentary requirements were: a written history, HABS/HAER level measured drawings and photo documentation. Copies of the materials are located in both the Kate Waller Barrett Library and the Alexandria Black History Resource Center.

III. ANALYSIS

As a result of the phasing of this project, Staff, the Board and the applicant have had the opportunity to see the townhouses constructed in Phase I thus far and take away lessons learned to inform designs for future phases.

Lessons Learned from Phase I

Staff created the following list of “Lessons Learned” and met with the applicant in the field. Where possible, the applicant has amended building permits for Phase II to incorporate the comments. The notes in italics reflect what was discussed in the field with the applicant’s representative, Greg Shron, and any decisions made. Most of these items are discussed in further detail below while some are of such a minor scale that they have been addressed in the field through the Certificate of Occupancy process.

1. Loft cornice – reduce projection (*Reduced to 8” projection*)
2. Entry projection on door hoods (*Will reduce projection on bracketed door hoods*)
3. Foundation treatment (*Will clean up better to reduce mold form and will use a rougher paint to create a more consistent parged finish*)
4. Utilities on the front – can they be relocated to rear? (*Greg will look into moving at least one to rear but if not will relocate below window apron*)
5. Light fixture – more variety in next blocks (*Will submit additional fixture selections and increase variety*)
6. Aluminum battens on Hardie Panel at loft level (*Battens will be painted going forward*)
7. Coping/firewall – paint dark or cover with metal (*Applicant will comply*)
8. More glass in the loft level – transom window above doors? (*Not enough room to add a transom but will add a trim piece, possibly similar to treatment at end units, to diminish sense of void between window and cornice*)
9. *Leave some of future painted brick buildings unpainted to be more in keeping with historic treatment of brick.*
10. *Garage doors to be left color of trim (white) rather than painted to match siding/wall color.*
11. *Construct a fin wall to shield utilities from street view such as at the rear of the ARHA units on the SE corner of N Alfred and Madison.*

12. *Paint scuppers to match roof color so they disappear.*

Architectural Styles in Phase IV

The Board has generally encouraged more creative and subtly contemporary but compatible designs for new buildings, so that the public is not confused about which buildings are old and which are new. A central tenet of the *Design Guidelines* states: “while new residential buildings in the historic districts should not create an appearance with no historical basis, direct copying of buildings is discouraged.”

From the beginning, the applicant’s stated design intent with the redevelopment of James Bland Homes has been to use typical vernacular forms and representative architectural styles found in Parker-Gray in order for this large new development to visually blend into the fabric of the surrounding historic district as much as possible, particularly where abutting existing historic buildings. Therefore, although the applicant does not directly copy any specific historic building, historic architectural styles are present. The *Guidelines* also state that the architectural details of buildings designed in any particular style should be stylistically consistent throughout that building. Staff finds that the proposed buildings generally satisfy the *Guidelines*.

Multi-Family Buildings (North Patrick Street)

Staff finds the proposed changes to the multi-family buildings to be an improvement from the previous hearing. What follows is a review of the Board’s comments and how they have been addressed by the applicant.

1. *Strengthen the differentiation between the end buildings and the center building through the use of architectural details and materials, while still maintaining a family resemblance;*

The applicant has made some positive changes to further differentiate the two end buildings from the center building. Staff finds the use of two different brick colors to be appropriate but recommends that the applicant continue to find a balanced contrast of brick color—one which is distinctly but not overwhelmingly different. Furthermore, the use of a stringcourse only on the end buildings contributes to the differentiation. Due to the different proportions of the end buildings, it would seem appropriate to remove the fixed “third” sash on the lower level of the window grouping at the second and third stories. Although the triple sash configuration is quite successful on the middle building, Staff finds that the proportions are not as successful on the smaller end buildings. Repeating the paired double-hung configuration found at the first and fourth floors will result in a more balanced solid/void ratio for the walls as well as contribute to a clear differentiation without -- compromising the quality of the building.

2. *Restudy the proposed arch entry feature at the entrances to the courtyards and to pay close attention to the public spaces.*

The applicant has replaced the arch with brick piers and a simple metal fence panel. This successfully opens up the interior courtyards to the streets while creating a defined semi-public space and entry area. The material selections strengthen the relationship among the buildings. Staff recommends that the applicant provide details about the metal work designs for the entire

project.

3. *Strengthen the visual and physical projections on the buildings in plan and elevation and emphasize this through subtly different materials and colors to break up the massing and add dimension.*

Staff finds that the applicant has adequately strengthened the projections and recesses to break up the massing and add physical and visual depth to the building wall.

4. *Restudy the single fire exit doors on the west elevation of the center building to minimize its appearance as a door and to visually coordinate this element with the proportions of the surrounding fenestration.*

The applicant has improved this detail and also reworked other doors resulting in an appropriate door hierarchy throughout the project.

5. *Provide more information on the materials, colors and details of the multifamily buildings. Specifically, to use appropriate, high-quality windows as they were disappointed with what was being used in Phase I. In addition, there was a request for details on the balconies and other metalwork proposed for the project. The applicant was advised to not have head joints in the masonry lintels and to consider two distinct brick colors to differentiate the center building from the end buildings.*

The applicant needs to submit a materials board and other design details.

6. *Provide additional information on the materials, colors and details of the townhouses and park.*

This information follows below.

7. *Elevate the buildings at the parapet to visually reinforce the verticality.*

The applicant has visually strengthened the cornice on the corner and center projections of the center building but reduced or de-emphasized the cornices on the end buildings. Staff believes that these limited changes are subtle but effective. Staff's fundamental concern is the proportion of the light colored fourth floor relative to the medium value color of the three story brick body below. The fourth floor effectively represents the entablature of a Neo-Classical building which is organized with a base, middle and top but the height shown would be more appropriate on a five to ten story building. As rendered, this fourth floor level is over-scaled and out of proportion with the overall height of this project. Staff supports limiting the height of the brick on these buildings to three stories, in order to keep the multi-family buildings in scale with the surrounding townhouses but suggests that the visual mass of the fourth level may be mitigated by using color for the HardiPanel that is closer in value to the brick color rather than the light cream color now shown. In addition, the submitted drawings seem to indicate that different colors and materials will be used for the two cornice bands, the HardiePanels, the brick mortar joints and the window lintels. Since the project has a fairly neutral color scheme, Staff recommends that

the applicant simplify and coordinate the color palette. For example, Staff recommends that the color for the cornices, lintels and mortar joints be coordinated and that the HardiePanel color be darker to blend with the brick.

8. *Consider the use of a spandrel to create a double-height window at the second and third stories.*

The applicant submitted second option for the multi-family design with a spandrel between the second and third stories on the center building. Staff finds that this contributes to the industrial aesthetic yet detracts somewhat from the clearly articulated punched fenestration. Staff does not have a strong opinion on the spandrel option and finds both schemes to have merit.

Townhouses

Staff commends the applicant for the continued refinement of the units in the James Bland redevelopment project and for responding to the specific comments made by the Board during previous phases. The townhouses in Phase IV are not unlike Phases I and II, with the exception that there are no “alley units” and none of these townhouses are adjacent to historic properties. Stylistically, some new elevation designs are proposed while others from previous phases are not repeated. Generally, the townhouses are built to the property line but variation is provided through setbacks and projecting bays. The streetscape itself will consist of six foot wide sidewalks along all frontages, with four foot wide landscape strips with street trees. The proposed fences, trash receptacles, benches and ganged mailboxes are generally appropriate and consistent with similar elements throughout the historic districts.

The treatment of the loft level has received significant attention from the Board and Staff throughout this project. The intent has been to increase the transparency of the loft level and to make this element visually recede as much as possible. The applicant has reduced the projection of the loft level cornice from 1.5 feet to 8 inches, which will help minimize the appearance of this element from the street. In addition, Staff finds that in the few instances where the loft level has a side elevation, that additional small windows will be added, where possible.

As Phase IV introduces new architectural styles and building types, some of them continue to need refinement. Some of the most successful townhouses constructed as part of Phase I are those that have minimal ornamentation. This also prevents the townhouses from being overly replicative of nearby historic townhouses. Therefore, Staff recommends that the window hoods at the first floor of Lots 18 and 21 on Madison Street be removed. In addition, the two units on the private street on lots 5-6, are depicted as two distinct townhouse styles. These particular units, as one of the few instances of a pair rather than a row of townhouses, should be twin units to be more consistent with historic development. Finally, the two brick townhouses on the private street, while remaining unpainted at the suggestion of Staff, need refinement of the third story windows. The projecting bay is a successful element that provides depth and interest on these units and others throughout the project. However, Staff finds that the fenestration pattern is unbalanced at the third story with a single window above the paired windows of the projecting bay. Staff recommends that the applicant restudy this condition and consider adding a paired window at the third story.

Colors and Materials

As a large and highly visible project within the Parker-Gray Historic District, the Board and Staff have consistently emphasized that high-quality materials, details, and finishes would be expected for this project. New materials, such as HardiePlank siding and trim, are often approved by the Board for new construction and are appropriately used here. In addition, the inclusion of some traditional materials and stylistically historic details make this new construction compatible with the existing historic fabric. The applicant has chosen a materials palette that includes both traditional materials; such as brick and standing seam metal, as well as new materials; such as HardiePlank siding, synthetic slate, and Fypon. Staff finds that, in general, the proposed materials are appropriate for new construction, are visually compatible with nearby buildings of historic merit, and have been approved by the Board on other cases of new construction, including Phases I and II.

However, since approval of the previous phases, the Board has amended several of its policies as part of the Modern and Sustainable Materials initiative. Staff notes that the windows approved for the previous phases are not in conformance with the *Alexandria Window Performance Specifications* as adopted as part of the *Window Policy*. Therefore, windows for this phase, and all subsequent phases, must be in conformance with the new policy. Any other materials that the applicant proposes to use, or change from prior approvals, must be in conformance with all BAR-adopted policies. This does allow the applicant more flexibility going forward, since this is new construction. While the DSUP approval stipulated certain specific materials that must be used (for example, wood front doors), there is some freedom to use fiberglass doors in other areas or to use high-quality aluminum-clad windows.

Since the concept review, Staff and the Board have expressed concern that all five blocks would look alike, with little differentiation. One notices a natural variety of differing architectural styles, heights, massing, color and details throughout the historic districts. While the height, scale, massing and general architectural detail have been approved for the entire project, and there is some variety among the phases, it is possible to encourage additional differentiation through changes in architectural details and color. Staff believes this variety is highly desirable in order to minimize the potentially monolithic effect of a new project this size on a small scale, architecturally modest historic district.

Now that the Board and Staff have had the opportunity to view several constructed townhouses in the field, Staff recommends that the applicant revise the body color palette by adding new colors and removing some previously used colors and to propose new and different details, such as light fixtures. In addition, Staff recommends that, in keeping with historic development patterns in the district, that the brick townhouses proposed to be painted, be left unpainted. While the development will obviously look “new” for years to come in comparison to the surrounding historic district, these small changes may add an organic quality and reduce a sense of sameness for the overall project.

Park

BAR members are selected by City Council for their “demonstrated interest, experience, or education in history, architecture or historic preservation.” The authority of the BAR under sec.

10-200 of the Zoning Ordinance is fairly broad but does not specifically address the design of a public park. The Board is asked in sec. 10-201(F) “To assure that new structures, additions, landscaping and related elements be in harmony with their historical and architectural settings and environs.” A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for “exterior architectural features” but the *Design Guidelines* do not have a chapter explaining how the various elements of a park should relate to the “architectural character and scale of the district.”

By past practice, plant materials, children’s play equipment and paving (except where used for parking) are not reviewed by the BAR. However, permanent planters, fences, garden walls, street furniture and the exterior lighting of buildings are described in the *Design Guidelines* and require approval. Therefore, the detailed design of certain architectural elements of this park, such as fences and piers, the brick wall and the seating wall, and possibly the stage, are the only elements within the Board’s purview. Artwork and landscape features will not require approval, though the BAR’s comments are welcome if, in the Board’s opinion, these features would conflict with the architectural character and scale of the district.

Staff supports the conceptual design of the park and believes that the choice of a musically themed park is appropriate as a reference to James Bland, a popular songwriter and musician who was noted for breaking racial barriers in the music industry.¹ Staff has no objection to the proposed park materials within the Board’s purview, including the open low metal fence with brick piers, traditional park benches, and large metal planters. In addition, Staff will work with the applicant on the text and graphics of the historical marker and will also ensure that it conforms to the City’s recently adopted Wayfinding Program.

Additional Recommendations

Staff has retained some of the more general development-wide conditions approved by the BAR for Phases I and II.

Rooftop HVAC Screening

Staff believes that the most appropriate way to address the visibility of rooftop HVAC condensers is to require the applicant to work with Staff, in the field, to place the units in a location that is either not visible or only minimally so. Staff generally discourages the use of rooftop screening around condensers since the larger structure can draw more attention to the screening than the HVAC unit would have by itself. This is very relevant in this project because there will be a significant number of rooftop units.

Solar Collectors

Staff proposes to treat approval of the solar collectors similar to the way rooftop HVAC condensers will be handled. The applicant proposes to install the necessary hardware for six solar panels to be located on the roofs of most unit types; however, installation of the units themselves will be the responsibility of the future property owner. The solar panels specified by the applicant would measure roughly 6 feet by 5 ¼ feet. They would be placed at an angle, with the highest point 14 inches above the flat roof in order to maximize exposure to the sun. Instead

¹ *Documentary Study and Archaeological Resource Assessment for the James Bland Homes, City of Alexandria, VA.* Prepared by Boyd Sipe and Kimberly Snyder (Thunderbird Archaeology) in consultation with History Matters, LLC. February 2010.

of returning to the BAR for approval of the solar collectors on each unit, Staff recommends that the property owner, or the developer, work with BAR Staff to determine the most appropriate location for the solar collectors. It may be necessary to install mock-ups in the field so that Staff can determine the visibility of the solar collectors.

Garage Doors Color Scheme

Initially, Staff was concerned about the starkness of white garage doors, especially where there are a number of garage doors in a row. Two-car, overhead garage doors are not a feature found on historic townhouses in the district and their appearance should be minimized to the maximum extent possible. In Phase II, the Board approved a condition requiring the garage doors to be the body color of the unit. However, after reviewing the installed garage doors of Phase I in the field, it was determined that white garage doors, to match the trim, are the least offensive option. Furthermore, the majority of the garage doors are only visible within the utilitarian alleys.

Mailboxes

The Board initially recommended that the applicant inquire about whether the USPS would be willing to deliver mail to the individual units within the development. Unfortunately, that is not feasible and ganged mailboxes must be installed. The applicant has not indicated the location of the mailboxes and should work with Staff to appropriately locate the mailbox.

Staff recommends deferral of this application for continued study of Phase IV of the James Bland Redevelopment with the recommendations discussed above.

STAFF:

Catherine Miliaras, Urban Planner, Historic Preservation Section
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Planning & Zoning (Development):

The applicant must comply with DSUP condition #17 related to architecture/site planning. (The applicant has complied with many of these conditions already).

The applicant shall provide the following building refinements to the satisfaction of the Director of P&Z:

General

- a. All HVAC units shall be located on the roof and not visible from public or private streets.
- b. All at-grade utilities shall be screened with landscaping or a fence/wall.
- c. The primary exterior materials for each unit shall be limited to masonry, precast, stucco, wood or cementitious siding. Secondary trim and accent elements may include composite materials if approved by the BAR. Samples of all materials shall be provided.
- d. Porches shall be wood and stoops shall be brick or metal and porch railings shall be a single material, either wood, or metal. Composite materials may be used in lieu of wood where specifically approved by the BAR.
- e. Chimney enclosures shall be brick, and watertables, exposed foundations shall be brick.
- f. Fireplace vents, flues, vent stacks and other similar protrusions shall not be permitted on any public street or private street frontage including corner units. Furnace vents shall discharge through the roof or the rear facade. HVAC vents or associated elements shall not be visible from a public street. Roof penetrations shall be confined to the rear of the building.
- g. Pitched roofs shall be standing seam metal (painted, galvanized or terne coated) and shingles shall be slate or metal, or a comparable high quality material approved by the Board of Architectural Review. (City Council)
- h. Fences located within the front and/or side yards shall be made of painted wood or metal with a maximum of 30" to 42" height with a minimum of 50% openness.
- i. All retaining walls shall be brick or stone.
- j. Fixed plantation shutters shall be installed for all windows within the townhouse tandem garages facing the public or private street.

Townhouse

- k. Continue to work with Staff to enhance the side and rear elevations of the townhouse units and ARHA flats.
- l. Continue to work with Staff to reduce the actual or perceived height of the south facing facades of the market rate and ARHA units on Wythe Street.
- m. Useable front porches shall be added to 10-12 of the townhouses and/or ARHA triplex flats with the locations to be determined in consultation with Staff. All porches shall be 6 - 8 feet deep.

Alley Houses

- n. Continue to work with Staff to address the perceived mass and scale and refine details of these buildings.

Multifamily Buildings

- o. Continue to work with Staff to enhance elevations of the multi-family buildings.
- p. North multifamily building: This building shall be refined by breaking its expression into subunits so that each of the architectural expressions has a consistent relationship to the geometry of the curved street, without modifying the footprint of the building.
- q. Architectural expression, multifamily buildings: the three proposed multifamily buildings shall be redesigned to the satisfaction of the Director, P&Z, such that each building expresses a clear and identifiable architectural style; further, the two south buildings shall be redesigned not to appear as twin buildings, and the north multifamily building shall be redesigned to express a smaller scale through subdivision of its mass into three visually distinct units.
- r. Entries at multifamily buildings: Building entries shall be designed to create a prominent and welcoming presence for all three buildings.
- s. The design of the multi family buildings shall be subject to the requirements herein to the satisfaction of the Director of P&Z and the issues shall be addressed prior to public hearing before the Parker-Gray BAR. (P&Z) (PC)

P&Z Development Staff Findings for Phase IV:

- F1. Site planning and architecture is consistent with DSUP and CDD plan approvals.
- F2. Design and Detail of the revised multi-family buildings are consistent with the recently approved amendments approved for these buildings.
- F3. Paint colors for the townhouses appear fine. We have received some feedback from the City Council and members of the community that some of the townhouse colors may be including too many pastel colors. However, that does not seem to be the case in this submission. We note that three of the townhouses are planned to be the same yellow color. Perhaps one of them could be a darker yellow or a light beige color to add to the variety.
- F4. The window sizes of the rear elevation of unit #10 appear small.
- F5. It would be nice to have additional windows on the rear of units #18, 21, & 7 as only one window is shown in these ARHA buildings.
- R1. Recommend that not all three of the brick units (13-15) be painted which will add variety and address concerns that there are few brick buildings being included in this project.

Code Administration:

- C1 Building, plumbing, and electrical permits are required to be issued prior to the start of work.
- C2 Five sets of plans are required to be submitted for review prior to the issuance of the permits.
- C3 All four story and multi-family buildings (three or more dwelling units) will be reviewed under the 2009 IBC.

Alexandria Archaeology (from previous case):

Archaeology Conditions

1. Archaeological work shall be completed in compliance with the Programmatic Agreement between the City of Alexandria, GPB Associates LLC, the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and the Virginia State Historic Preservation Office Regarding the Redevelopment of the James Bland Public Housing, City of Alexandria.

2. The statements in archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Demolition; Basement/Foundation plans; Erosion and Sediment Control; Grading; Utilities, etc.) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:

a. All required archaeological preservation measures shall be completed prior to ground-disturbing activities (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of the Zoning Ordinance) or a Resource Management Plan must be in place to recover significant resources in concert with construction activities. To confirm, call Alexandria Archaeology at (703) 838-4399.

b. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.

c. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

3. The final site plan shall not be released until the City archaeologist confirms that all archaeological field work has been completed or that an approved Resource Management Plan is in place.

4. Certificates of Occupancy will not be issued for this property until the final archaeological report has been received and approved by the City Archaeologist.

Open Space

1. Continue to work with City staff to incorporate historic character into the design and to investigate the potential for historical interpretation on the site, including the creation and placement of interpretive markers. The consultant shall provide text and graphics for signage subject to approval by the Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, and the Planning Department.

Code

C-1 All required archaeological preservation measures shall be completed in compliance with Section 11-411 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Findings:

F-1 Documentary research conducted by Thunderbird Archaeology found no definite evidence of structures on this block prior to and during the Civil War; however, it is possible that

refugee slaves may have settled in the vicinity during the war. Residential development in this area was occurring by the third quarter of the 19th century. City directories and other archival sources show that most residents of the project area were African American laborers, although Euro-American laborers and a few skilled workers, tradesmen and professionals were also present. In the early 20th century, the project area developed primarily as an African American neighborhood. The area therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight primarily into 19th and early 20th-century domestic activities.

Transportation and Environmental Services (from previous BAR case):

Recommendations:

Comply with all requirements of DSP2008-00013 and Site Plan DSP2010-00001. (T&ES)

V. IMAGES

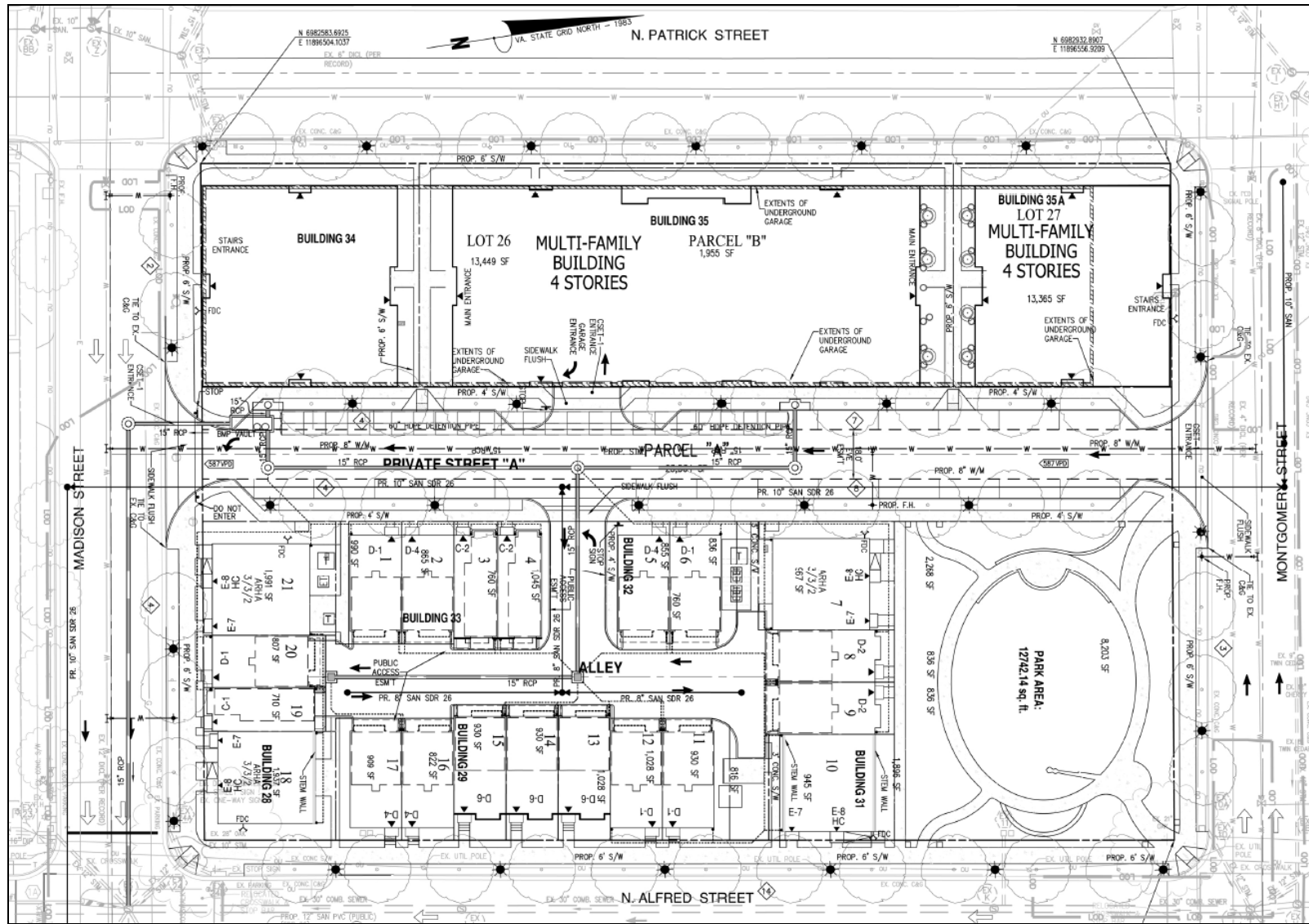


Figure 1. Phase IV Site Plan.



Figure 2. Madison Street townhouses strip elevation.



Figure 3. North Alfred Street townhouses strip elevation.



Figure 4. Montgomery Street (park-facing) townhouses strip elevation.

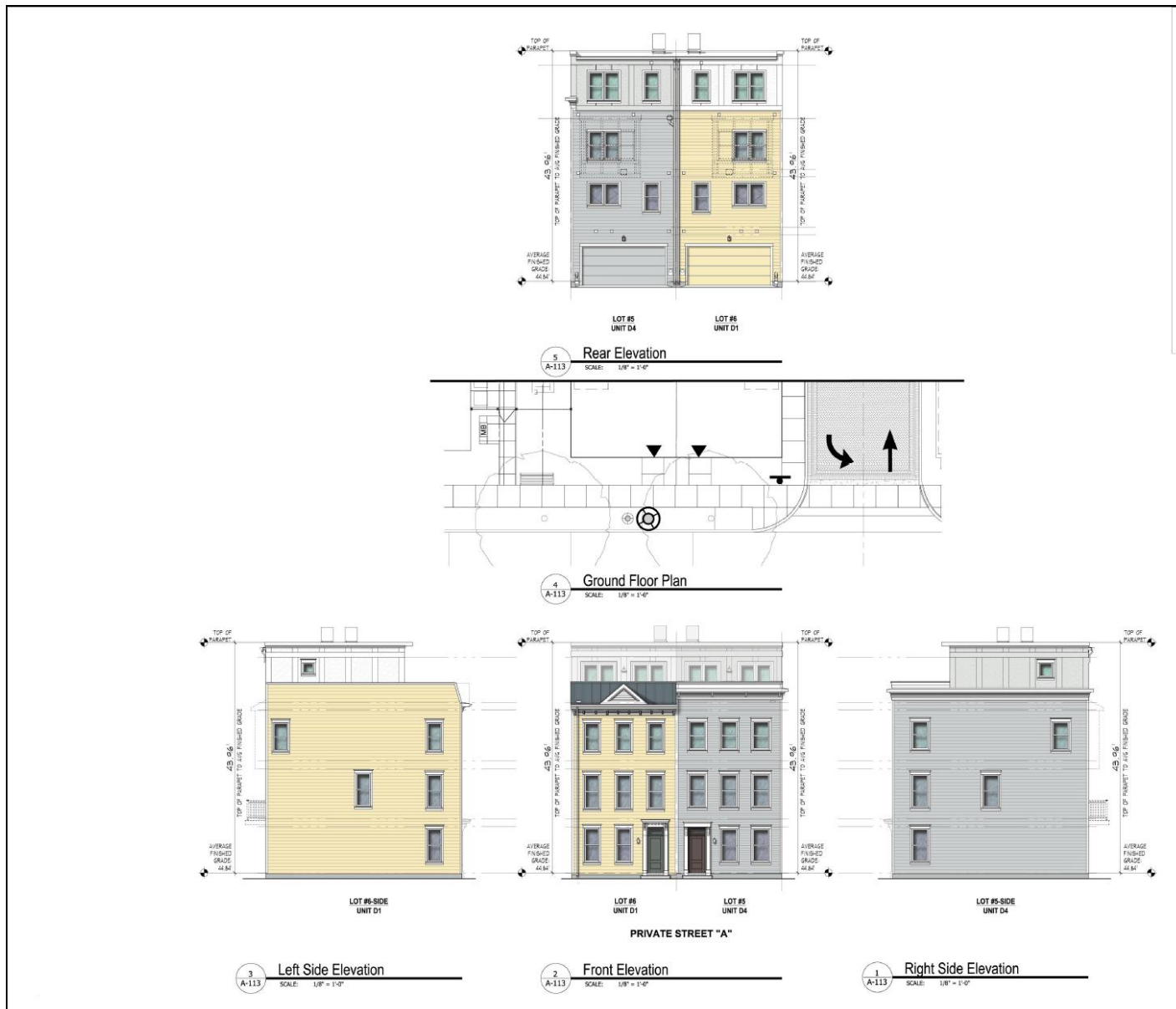


Figure 5. Private street, northernmost townhouses, strip elevation.



Figure 6. Private street, southernmost townhouses, strip elevation.



Figure 7. Multi-family buildings, North Patrick Street elevation.



Figure 8. Multi-family buildings, private street elevation.

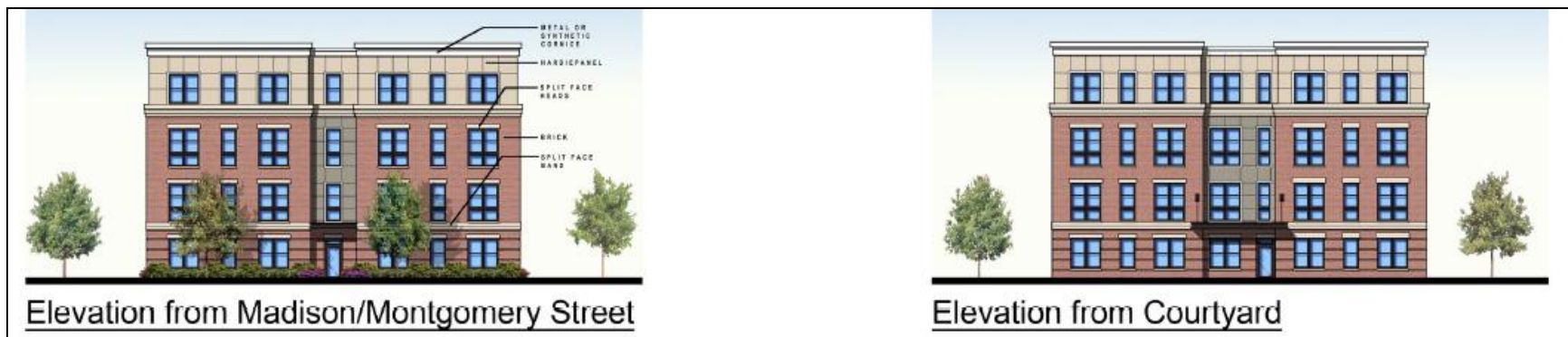


Figure 9. End building elevations from Madison and Montgomery streets and from courtyard.



Figure 10. Center multi-family building with spandrel option.



Figure 11. Details of multi-family buildings.

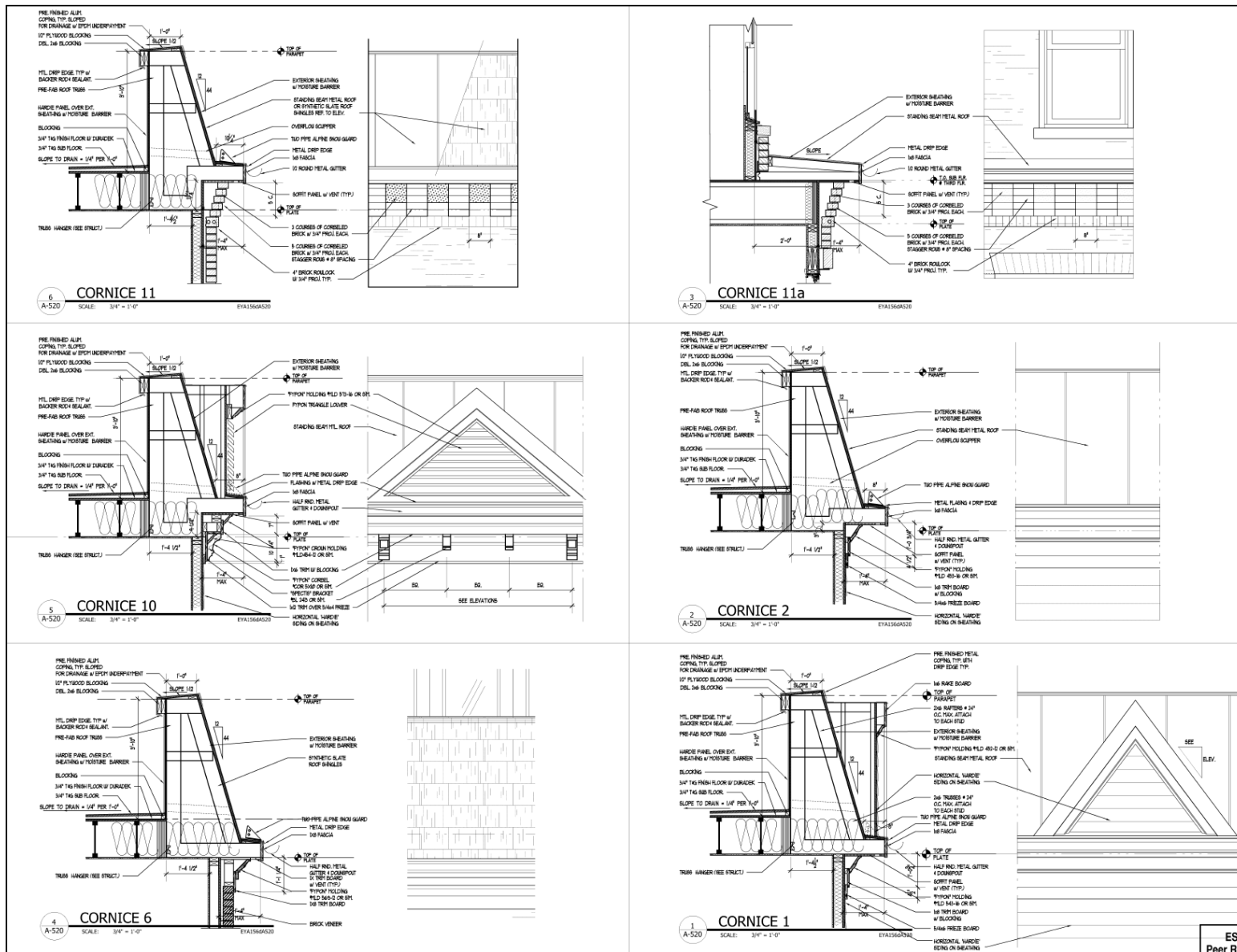


Figure 12. Cornice details.

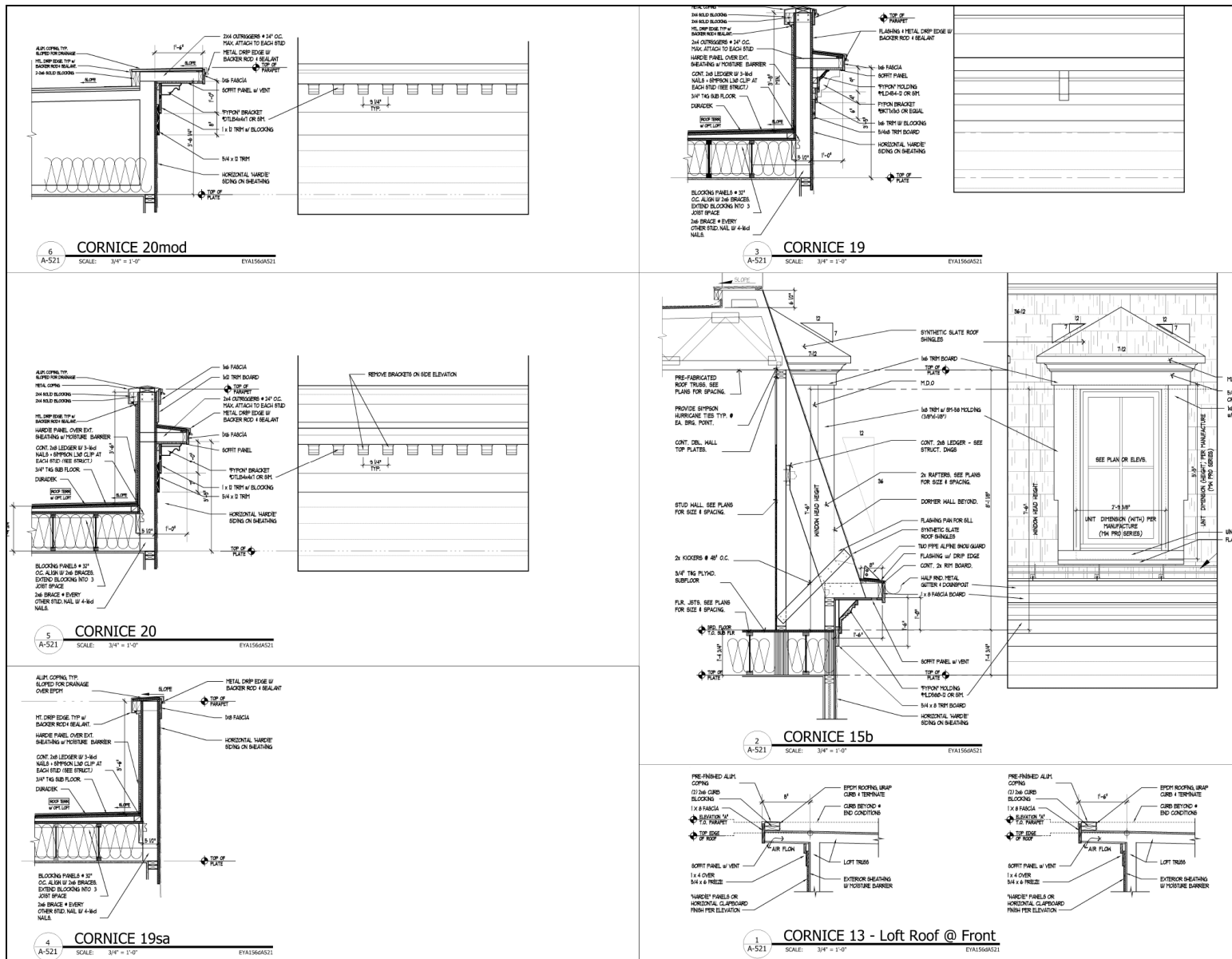


Figure 13. Cornice details. Note that the 1.5 foot projecting loft cornice is no longer in use in this project.

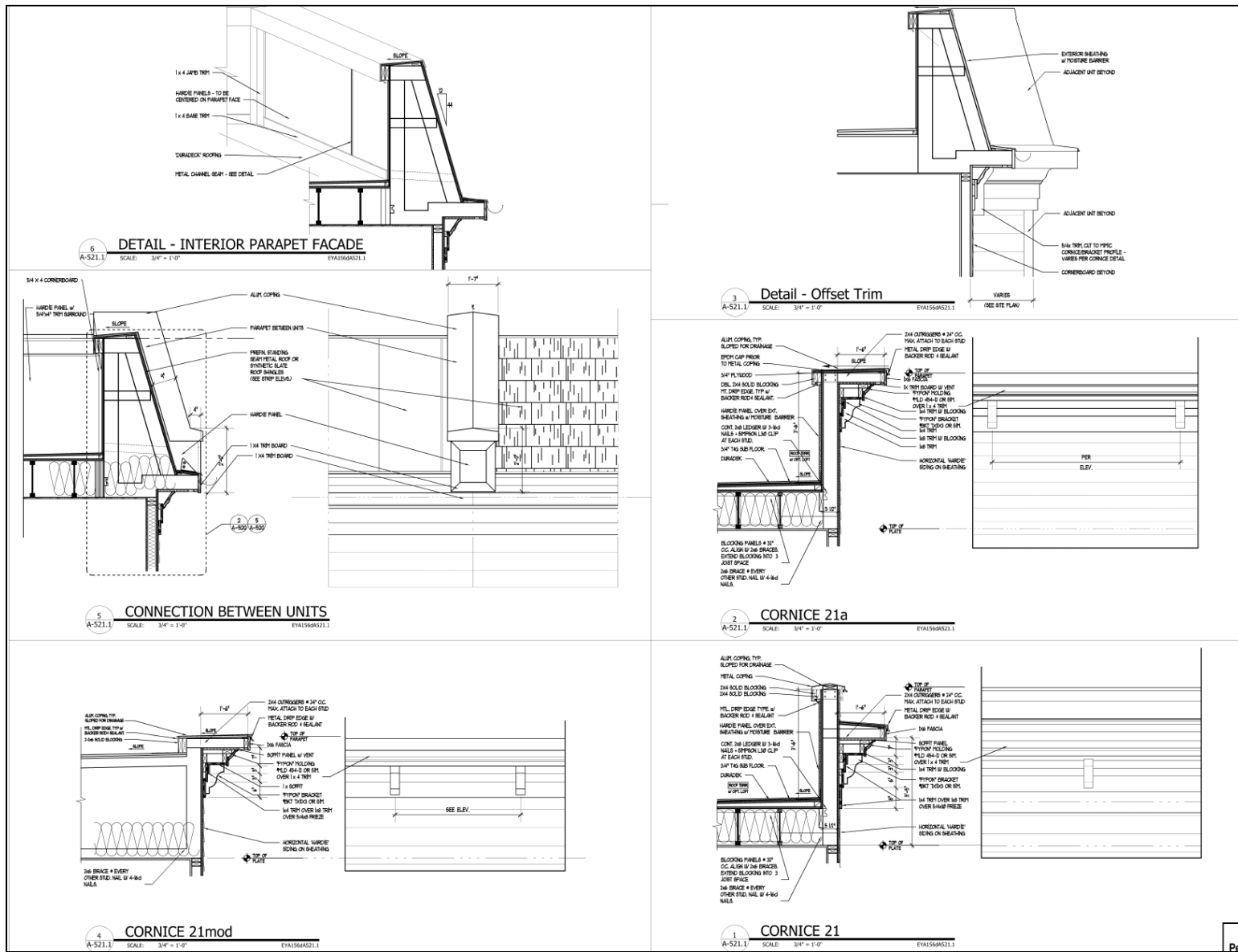


Figure 14. Cornice and parapet details.

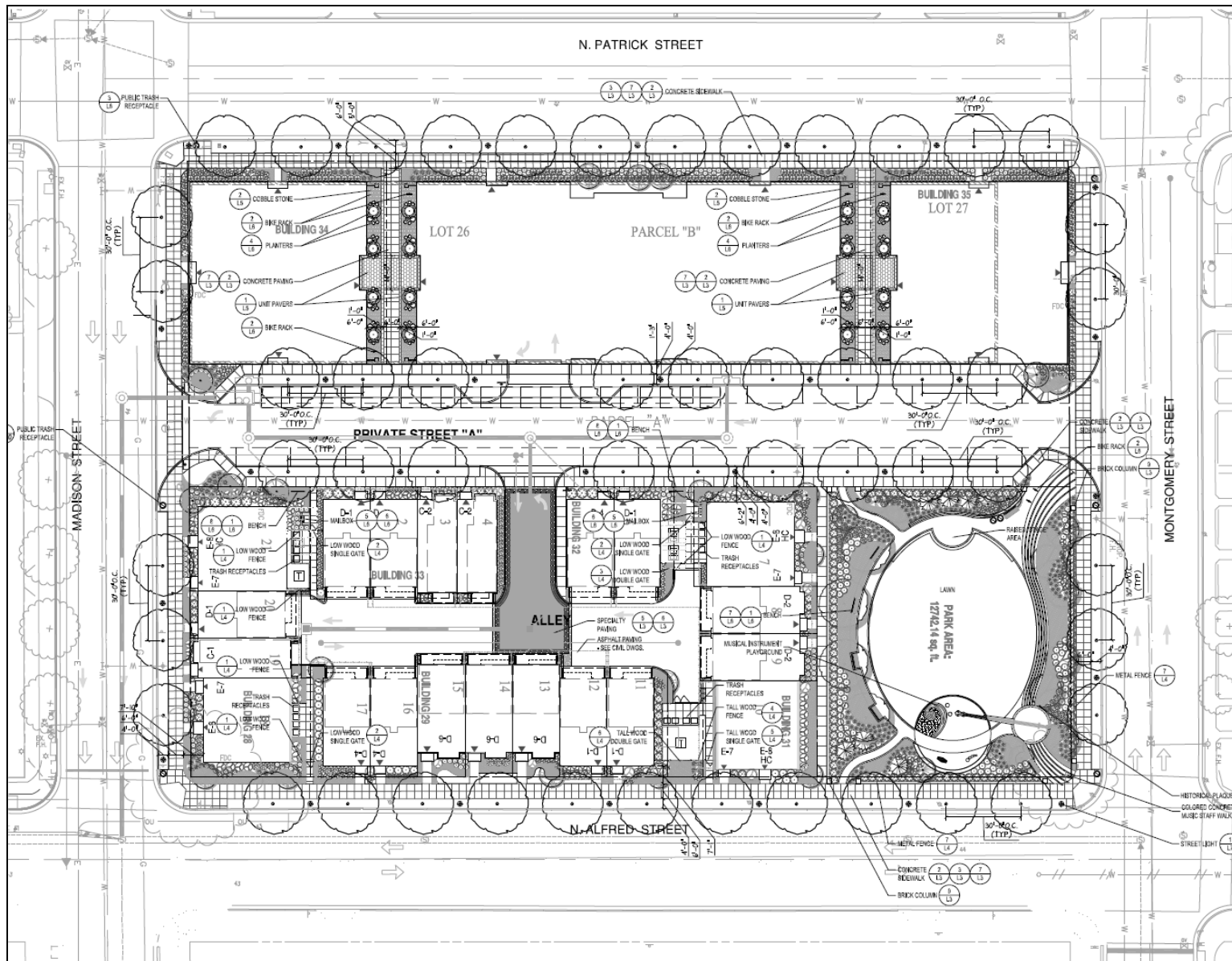


Figure 15. Hardscape plan.

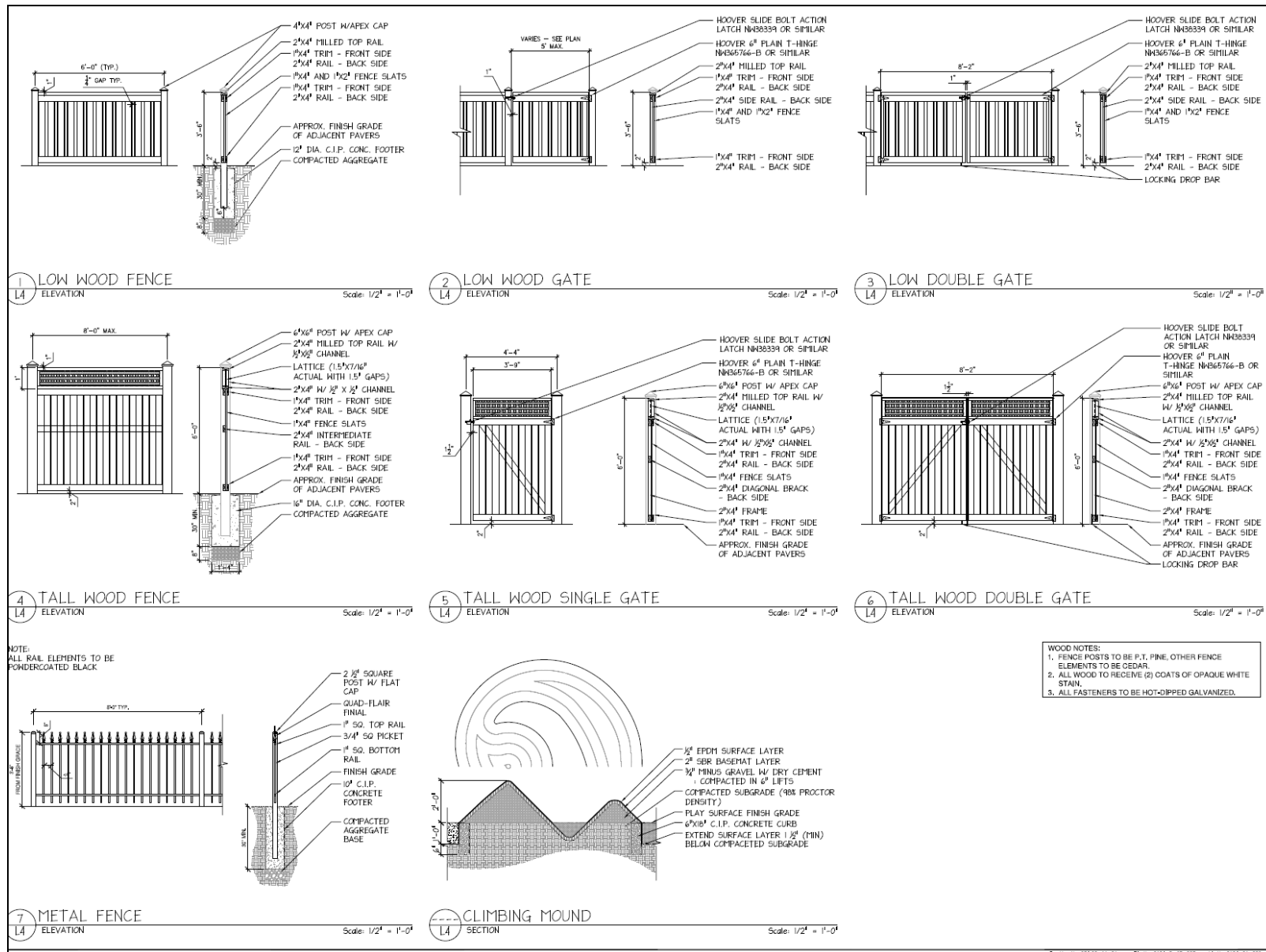


Figure 16. Hardscape details.

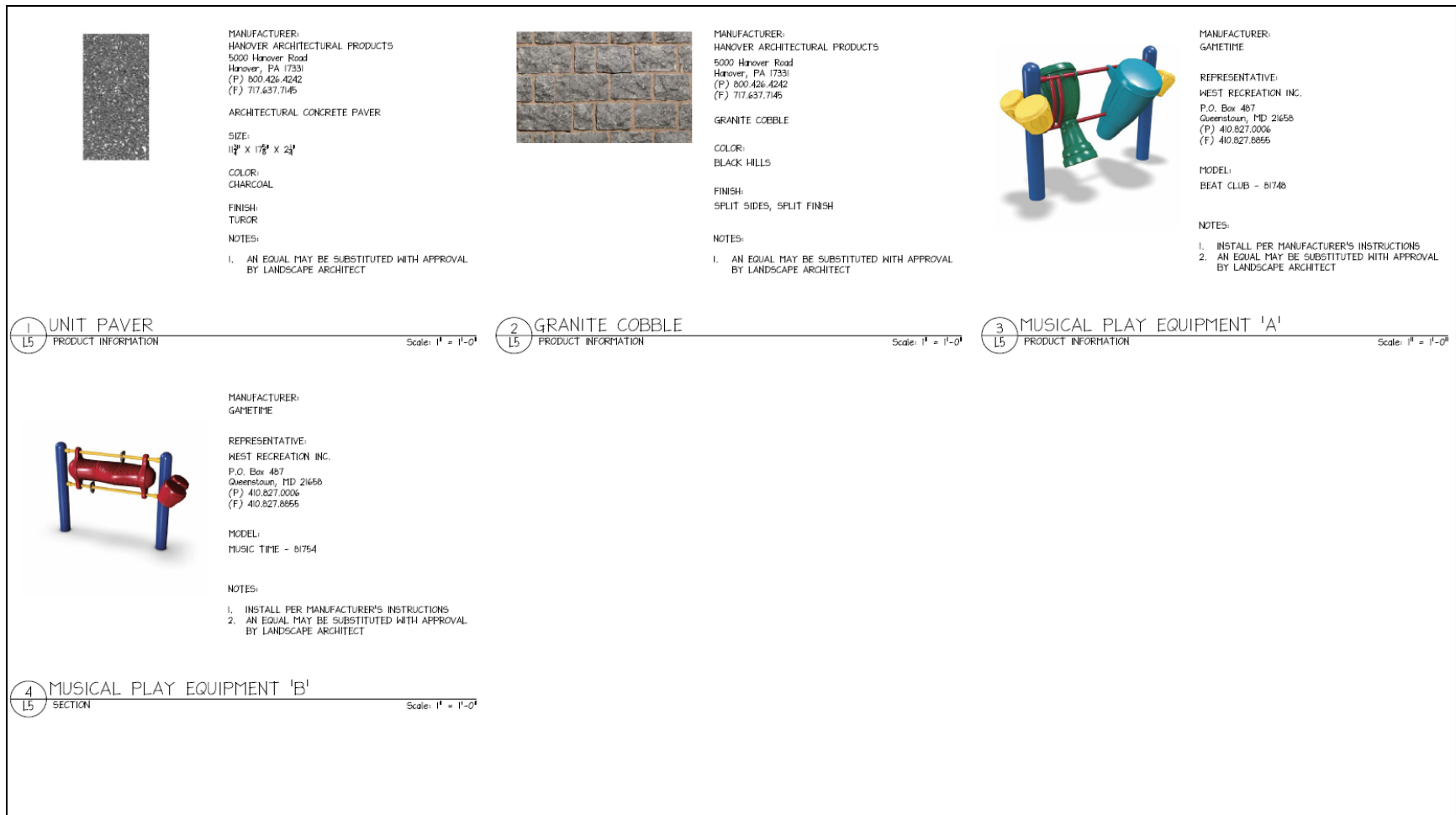


Figure 17. Hardscape details.

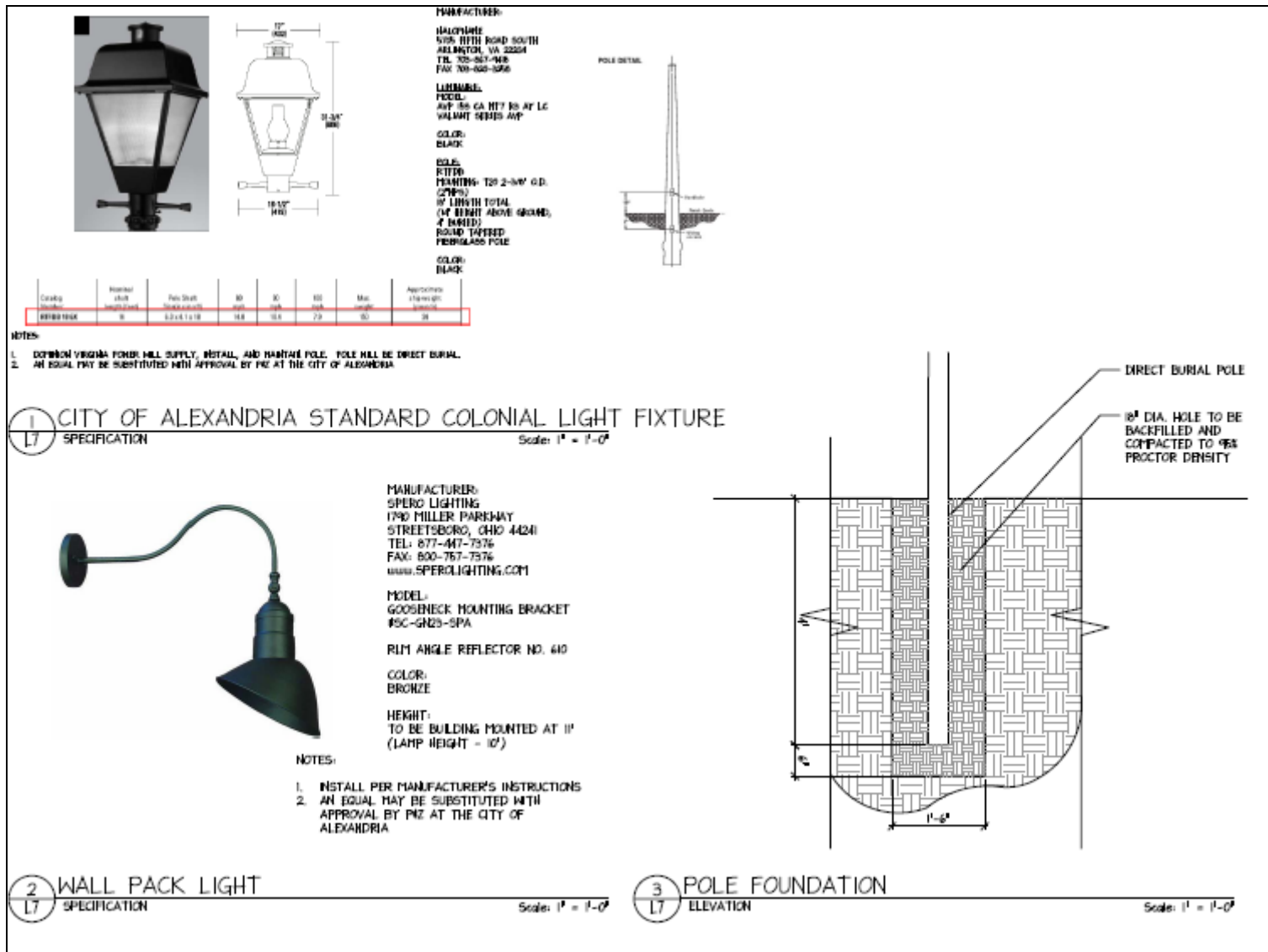


Figure 19. Lighting details.